

Gravina Access Project

presented by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

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What is the current status?

Spring & Summer Work

In April, we presented many alternatives for access to Gravina Island in a third, well-attended public meeting at Ketchikan's Ferry Civic Center. Since then, we completed additional environmental fieldwork and have begun screening the options to identify reasonable alternatives. We also have answered questions the public and others had asked about how the project would be funded (see "Policy Decisions" on page 4).

What are Reasonable Alternatives?

We soon expect to recommend "reasonable alternatives" to study further. ("Reasonable" means alternatives that appear to meet the project purpose and need and make sense from engineering, cost, and environmental points of view).

The project team needs guidance from the public, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, the City of Ketchikan, and the City of Saxman about what reasonable alternatives a list might include. This project originated in the community and community support will help to move it forward. The Borough Planning Commission has identified alternatives it wishes to see studied further—the high bridges C3 and C4 and expanded ferry service G4. The Borough Assembly is reserving judgement and wants to ensure the public is well informed before making a decision.

This newsletter is meant to inform you about the full range of options so that you can provide feedback to the planning team and your representatives on the Borough Assembly and City Councils.

What's next?

Once the reasonable alternatives are identified, the project team is poised to begin an environmental impact statement. Such an "EIS" is required by law for projects

using federal funding. The EIS, which will evaluate reasonable alternatives and a "no-action" option, will result in selection of a preferred alternative. However, this decision will come only after thorough evaluation of impacts to the natural and social environment and after further public and agency review.

Assembly work session October 17

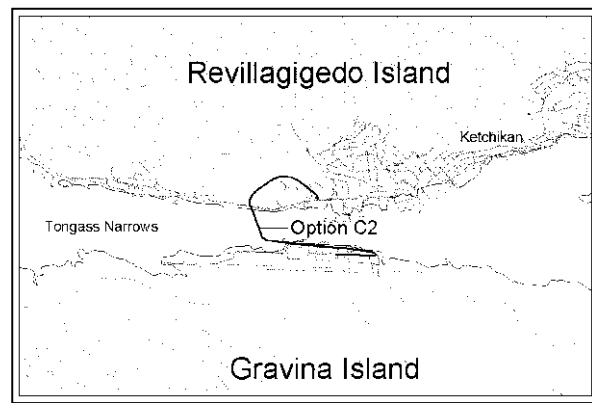
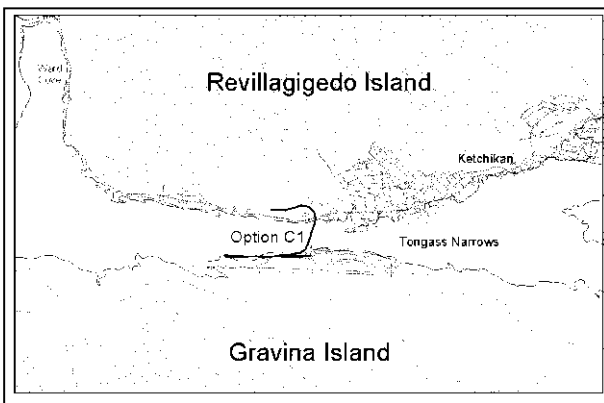
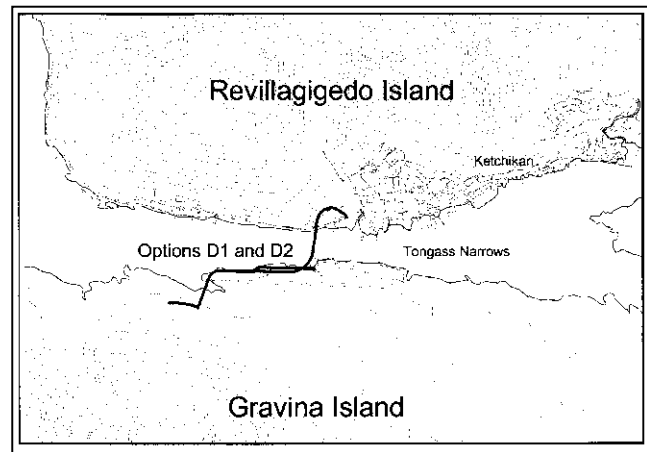
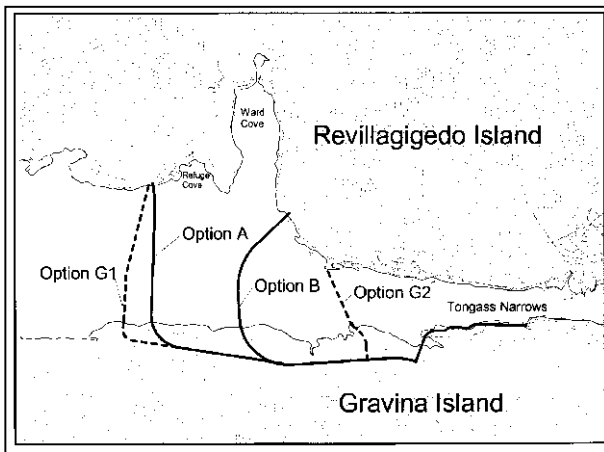
The Borough Assembly has scheduled a work session for Tuesday, October 17, 2000 at 6:00 p.m. at the Ferry Civic Center. The Ketchikan and Saxman City Councils are invited for a discussion of the alternatives. The Borough Planning staff will make a presentation and DOT&PF and HDR Alaska will be available to answer questions about the project. The meeting will be a great opportunity for you to learn more about the current status of the project.



Funding

About \$20 million has been designated for this project. As shown in the costs table on page 3, the least expensive alternatives are more than twice that amount, and the most expensive are more than 20 times that amount. No funding source has currently been identified to complete any alternative. Federal, state, and local sources are the most likely.

Range of Alternatives



Alternatives and Costs

The range of alternatives includes ferries, underwater tunnels, and bridges at a wide range of costs. Alternative locations are at or near the existing ferry route and also well north (Refuge Cove area) and south (Pennock Is.). Bridges are either "high" or "low." High bridges would pass all ferry and cruise ship traffic. Low bridges would pass ferry traffic but require cruise ships to go around Gravina Island. High bridges C3 and C4 would accommodate one-way cruise ship traffic. Other high bridge options would accommodate two-way cruise ship traffic.

The total construction cost is presented in the table at right, along with the assumed local match. The "Total Local Cost" column includes operations and maintenance of any non-bridge option (the state has committed to paying for operations and maintenance of bridge options only). It also includes interest to pay off general obligation bonds (assumed as the method of paying the 20% local match).

What has the project team heard about alternatives from the public?

"...I am a senior citizen and frequent flyer who happens to enjoy our current access system. Anyway you cut it, our little ferries criss-crossing Tongass Narrows fit into our scenery and way of life; they are part of the unique experience of Ketchikan"

(Ketchikan Daily News, letter, July 31, 2000)

"The Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce ... has long supported this project, and considers it a top priority for this community and region."

(public comment, September 2000)

"Please!!! No ferries we need a bridge. Thank you"
(written public comment May 2000)

"...I do not believe that a hard link access to Gravina is necessary today, nor is it necessary in the immediate, or foreseeable, future."

(Ketchikan Daily News, letter, July 20, 2000)

"Access of some kind to Gravina will be a major improvement to Ketchikan...."

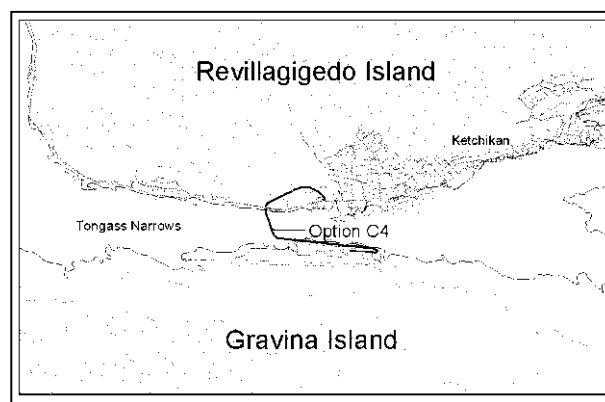
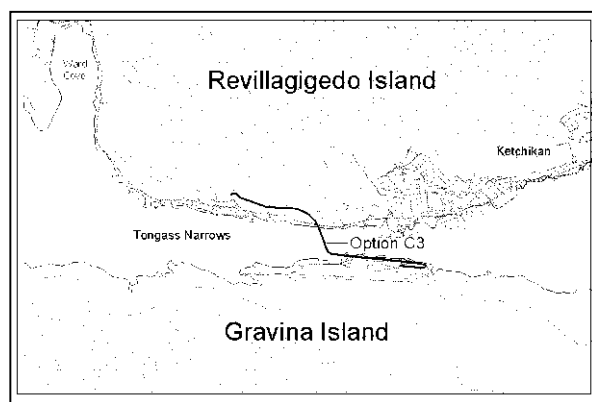
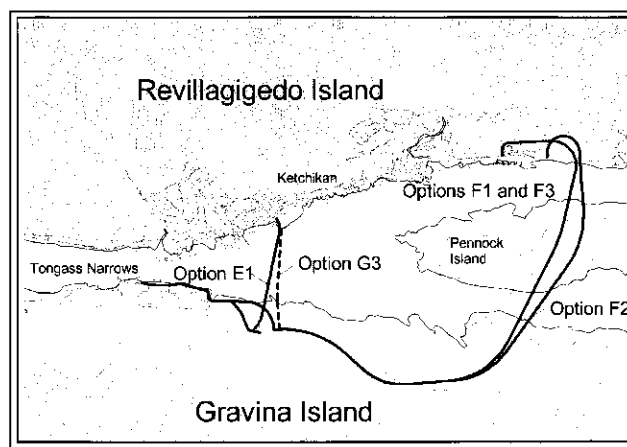
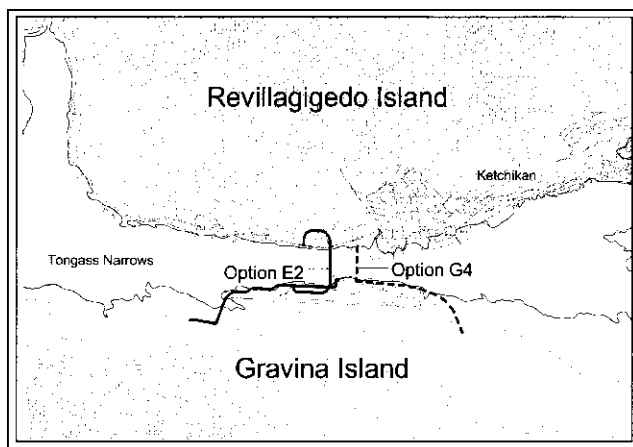
(public comment, October 1999)

"Building access to Gravina will be a great benefit to a majority of Ketchikan's travelers. My family & I will greatly benefit from the ease of access to our major transportation outlet..."

(public comment, October 1999)

"...There is also a worry about the cost of such a project. Both Ketchikan and the State are facing some lean fiscal conditions. I don't want to see my taxes go up or face the threat of tax increases for projects that are not essential. I think that there are many citizens out there that take a dim view of any tax increases at this time."

(public comment, April 2000)



Alternatives Ranked by Potential Amount of Local Match*

Alternative	Construction Total Cost (million \$)	Local Match 20% of Total (million \$)	Total Local Cost over 50 yrs (million \$)
NB No Build	0	0	28.5
D1 Low Bridge, ferry terminal to airport N.	85.3	17.1	38.4
C3 High Bridge, Signal Rd. to airport S.	139.5	27.9	62.8
C4 High Bridge, Cambria Dr. to airport S.	145.7	29.1	65.6
F3 High Bridge, C. Guard-Pennock-Gravina S.	173.3	34.7	78.0
C2 High Bridge, ferry terminal to airport S.	196.0	39.2	88.2
F1 High Bridge, C. Guard-Pennock-Gravina S.	196.5	39.3	88.4
F1 (Cable) Same, with cable stays	201.4	40.3	90.6
G4 Ferry, expanded service at existing location	40.7	8.1	95.2
G3 Ferry, downtown plaza to airport S.	45.0	9.0	97.2
C1 High Bridge, ferry terminal to airport N.	230.8	46.2	103.9
G2 Ferry, Peninsula Point to Gravina N.	63.1	12.6	105.5
D2 Low Bridge, moveable, ferry term. to airport	237.1	47.4	106.7
G1 Ferry, Refuge Cove to Gravina N.	68.1	13.6	108.0
A High Bridge, Refuge Cove to Gravina N.	256.1	51.2	115.2
B High Bridge, Peninsula Point to Gravina N.	366.6	73.3	165.0
E1 Tunnel, Jefferson St. to airport S.	250.4	50.1	166.5
E2 Tunnel, ferry terminal to airport N.	333.7	66.7	205.8
F2 Tunnel under E. channel-Pennock-airport S.	527.1	105.4	293.2

Notes: All ferry options are in addition to the existing ferry and do not replace it. The high bridges at Pennock Island are high on one channel, low on the other: F1 is high on the east; F3 is high on the west. Construction costs include a 35% amount for contingency.

*Potential non-federal funding sources include state, local, or private sources.

DOT&PF Policy Decisions Influence Alternatives Selection

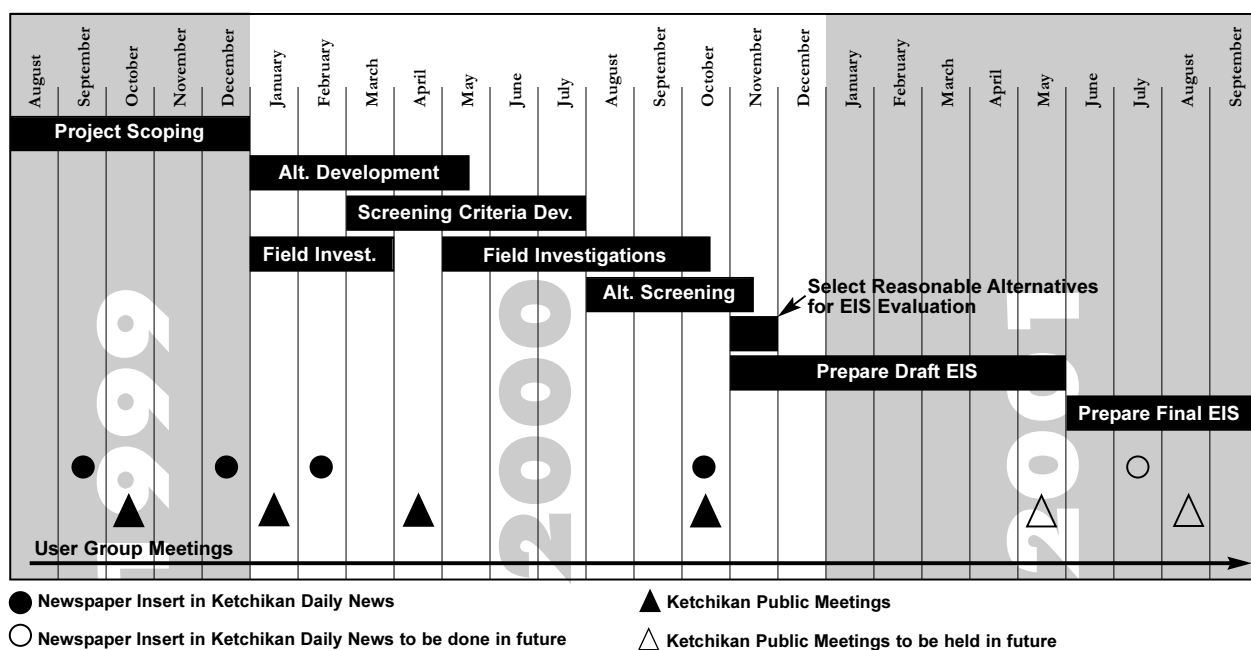
The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities made several important policy guidance decisions that influence the selection of reasonable alternatives:

- Alternatives costing more than \$150 million are considered too expensive and therefore not "reasonable" on the basis of cost.
- DOT&PF will fund operation and maintenance of bridge options only. This means local governments likely would be responsible for operation and maintenance costs of any tunnel or ferry alternative.
- DOT&PF will provide matching funds for the project through design. Matching funds for construction, approximately 20% of any construction cost, are expected to come from other sources such as local government or state general funds.

Project Schedule

The schedule below shows the tasks and public meetings that have led to the current alternatives screening stage of the project. Public comment at this point will aid elected officials and the

project team to select reasonable alternatives for evaluation in an environmental impact statement (EIS).



What does the Project Team Need Now?

The Gravina Access Project resulted from community support for improved access to Gravina Island. The project team seeks input from the community about which alternatives should

be studied further. Come to the work session on October 17 and participate in the discussion to help the Gravina Access Project move forward.

For More Detailed Information, go to www.gravina-access.com

Who do I contact for more information?

You may contact either of the following individuals to obtain additional information about the Gravina Access Project.

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